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Manners Maketh Man...

An Address
by

Pres. F. A. Hosmer

Delivered before the Students of

Oahu College

June 20, 1900

Honolulu
Hawaiian Gazette Co
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MANNERS MAKETH MAN

Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

In an address delivered last year at the inauguration of the new head of Wellesley College, President Eliot of Harvard suggested that the manners of American students needed amending and hoped that the new generation would show great improvement. He questioned whether American colleges inculcated manners with any success.

Some people are gentle and courteous by nature and like the poet Addison they seem to shed around them genial warmth and sunshine.

Others are careless in behavior and are rude because no kind friend has ever pointed out to them the defect. We all remember the words of the Scotch poet Burns—

> "O wad some power the Giftie gie us
> To see oursels as others see us."

Let me illustrate by an Eastern tale:

Many years ago during that period known to history as the dark ages, a Frankish knight was entertained by an Arab sheik. After an extended visit the knight, when on his way home, was overtaken by a slave of his host, who fell on his face before the Frank and

said: "My master has bidden me to ride after thee and give thee this message. He has been delighted to meet so polished a gentleman as thou art. He cannot allow a knight so courteous to go away without telling him of one little fault, a little bad habit, a peculiarity of speech and of gesture in one whose conduct would otherwise be perfect."

The knight accepted the criticism in good part.

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Here in the college I find the young men and young women with many virtues; they are faithful in study, honest and fair-minded. During the ten years I have been here, no boy or girl has ever done a mean act or willfully told an untruth. And yet you will bear with me if I apply this Oriental story to you all and say that none are so good but that they can be improved. Let it be said truthfully of every girl here, She is always a lady; let it be said with truth of every Punahou boy, He is always a gentleman. You bear the honor of the school in your keeping, in the class-room, on the campus, in your homes, at church, on the tram car, or wherever you are.

Let no rudeness come from a Punahou boy or a Punahou girl. Let it be noticeable to every one that the fact that you are a student at Oahu College is reason enough for your being courteous.

"Noblesse oblige" was the motto of the old French nobility. They thought that their position had its obligations. They were born to be ladies and gentlemen.

And I say to you today—"Noblesse oblige"—Your position has its obligations. You are students in the highest institution of learning in Hawaii-nei and you have in your keeping the honor of this school;—of this school, do I say?—more, you are to show to the community that you are worthy of the trust that is being placed upon you.

It is more necessary to be a gentleman than a scholar. The poet Chaucer, speaking of a lovely woman, said,

"She is mirrour of all courtesy."

True politeness like charity, suffereth long and is kind; it envieth not—it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. It doth not behave itself unseemly, it thinketh no evil, it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

But I am to confine myself to what the French call *les petites morales*—the little morals—and let me emulate the example of the great Kong Fu Tse, by giving a few negatives that may be useful.

Do not keep up a whispered conversation while a piece of music is being rendered. It indicates a lack of appreciation.

Do not whisper during the sermon; it shows disrespect and irreverence.

Do not make too much noise in applause. Applaud with discrimination. Let it appear that you have judgment. Do not ask for the whole programme over again. Too many encores are tedious in the extreme.

Do not keep time with the foot or hand at the concert or musicale to the annoyance of others.

Do not sit on a table. Camp manners are not fit for the house.

Do not sit on the back of a chair or settee and put your feet on the seat. Think of the ladies' dresses. Keep your feet on the floor or the ground.

Do not scatter crumbs or drop the peeling of fruit or pieces of paper where others will have to pick them up. Do not add to labor but be of the number of those who lessen it.

Do not put a moist hand on the polished surface of a piano; keep your handkerchief between the piano and your hand. The well bred hostess will observe and appreciate it.

Do not carry mud into the house or class room. Carefully clean the shoes on entering the door.

Do not forget the little phrases of good will that mark the perfect manners. "Thank you" costs so little and goes so far.

Do not by word or act give unnecessary pain to any one. There is enough sorrow in the world without our adding to it. Let us lighten sorrow and give pleasure where we can.

Good manners secure your admission to good society. Bad manners in the end bar you out. No one will tell you but you will be gradually dropped.

Let the moral tone of the school be against rudeness. Let common sense decide what is the proper conduct for each occasion and each place. We can

wrestle and shout on the foot ball field but not in the parlor or the class room.

There is a time for everything. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to keep silence and a time to speak.

He hath made everything beautiful in his time; it is the gift of God.

We boast our American civilization but there is another nation, now a near neighbor, which puts us to shame as far as manners are concerned. I refer to Dai Nippon, the empire of the Japanese,—the Frenchmen of the Pacific. We have in these Islands only the peasant class and yet even their manners are worth observing. There is much we can learn. They dress in quiet colors, they are personally clean, and seek clean surroundings, they have taste in ornamentation, they are polite to each other and to those of other nationalities.

In Japan the manners of the better classes are exquisite.

Some years since, when the relations between Korea and Japan were strained, news came to Osaka that the Japanese legation and consulate in Seoul, Korea, had been attacked and many Japanese had been massacred. The excitement at Osaka was intense. The citizens in mass meeting voted one million dollars and three regiments of soldiers. There were two

Koreans wandering in the streets of Osaka when the excitement was at the highest pitch—yet no deed of violence was done or word of insult offered. Would this conduct have been duplicated in any American city?

Is Japanese politeness superficial like their own lacquer which we admire so much? If it is, let me add that so is the dew drop that adds lustre to the rose.

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Do you know what Philistinism is? Do you think that Goliath was the last of the Philistines? Oh no! There are thousands of them, yea, tens of thousands not yet slain.

Do you know a Vandal when you see him?

In the fifth century after Christ a rude tribe of barbarians, called Vandals, came down from the North and conquered Rome. They destroyed countless monuments of art and literature and so we stigmatize as a Vandal any person who is so rude as to disfigure that which is beautiful—one who will cut his name on a graceful palm, break an iron fence, whistle in the opera house, mar the smooth surface of beautiful furniture, injure statuary, paintings, and other works of art, who will deface the fair pages of books, break a lady's fan, step on her train. Oh how ladies dread to see the Vandal approach!

I saw a Vandal once. He was a graduate of an American college. I was in the parlor of a distinguished son of Massachusetts. The Vandal was announced and entered, the gravel of the walk still clinging to his boots. He interrupted our conversation.

Soon he tilted back his chair, and placed one foot on the polished oak table and swayed to and fro, grinding the smooth surface of the costly wood with his gravelly instep. The host endured it in silence till patience ceased to be a virtue. He reached out his hand, grasped the offender's ankle, and placed the foot upon the floor.

Well, what is a Philistine? Matthew Arnold tells us that "He is one who is deficient in liberal culture and refinement; one without appreciation of the nobler aspirations and sentiments of humanity; one whose scope is limited to selfish and material interests." Philistinism is vulgarity, coarseness, rudeness, lack of good sense.

Some people are born coarse in the grain. They cannot be polished. To give them opportunities of education and refinement is like the traditional casting of pearls before swine. Thank God, there are none of that number in Punahou!

Let us turn from this picture to another more attractive—to that model of English manhood in the days of good Queen Elizabeth—Sir Philip Sidney. He has left us the true definition of noble manhood and noble womanhood. It is to have "high thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy."

When dying on the field of Lutzen, a cup of cold water was brought to cool his parched lips and as he eagerly seized it, he saw a private soldier, wounded unto death, wistfully gazing at the precious cup. "Take it," said Sidney, "thy necessity is greater than

mine." Even in death he was thoughtful to be a gentleman, to have high thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy.

If our young men and young women have high thoughts, if they are courteous and considerate, if they can always be depended upon to do what is right, their manhood and womanhood will be recognized by all people whose opinion is worth respecting.

To the young ladies I would say in closing,

"Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd;
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip, and spite
And slander die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble."

And to the young men, these words:

"Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part
And bow before the awful will,
And bear it with an honest heart.

"Who misses or who wins the prize,
Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

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